

In the Claims:

Please amend claim :

1.- 43. (Canceled).

44. (Previously Presented) A method for transacting multi-party electronic commerce over a network, comprising:

creating a plurality of atomic offers associated with a plurality of suppliers;

creating a plurality of hierarchical offers based on the plurality of atomic offers, the plurality of hierarchical offers including:

at least one first-level offer including at least one of the plurality of atomic offers,
and

at least one second-level offer including the first-level offer and at least one of the plurality of atomic offers not included within the first-level offer;

creating at least one counter offer associated with a consumer;

storing the plurality of atomic offers, the plurality of hierarchical offers and the counter offer in a memory;

matching the counter offer to one of the plurality of hierarchical offers to create a zero-sum offer; and

closing the zero-sum offer.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44, wherein:

each of the plurality of atomic offers include an atomic offer description and an atomic offer price;

each first-level offer includes:

a first-level fee,

a first-level description based on each of the included atomic offer descriptions,

and

a first-level price based on the first-level fee and each of the included atomic offer prices;

each second-level offer includes:

a second-level fee,

a second-level description based on the first-level description and each of the included atomic offer descriptions, and

a second-level price based on the second-level fee, the first-level price, and each of the included atomic offer prices;

the counter offer includes a counter offer description and a counter offer price; and

said matching the counter offer includes comparing the counter offer description and price to each first-level and second-level description and price, respectively, to determine a match.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44, wherein the zero-sum offer includes an atomic offer corresponding to each of the atomic offers included within the first-level and second-level offers.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45 46, further comprising:

determining whether each atomic offer included within the zero-sum offer is expired, invalid or unavailable; and

if so determined, not closing the zero-sum offer.

48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45 46, wherein said closing the zero-sum offer includes closing each atomic offer included within corresponding first-level and second-level offers.

49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 47, wherein said closing each atomic offer includes:

sending a payment based on the atomic offer price from the consumer to the supplier associated with the atomic offer; and

at least one of:

shipping a product associated with the atomic offer to the consumer, and
providing a service associated with the atomic offer to the consumer.

50. (Previously Presented) A computer readable medium including instructions adapted to be executed by a processor to perform a method for transacting multi-party electronic commerce over a network, the method comprising:

creating a plurality of atomic offers associated with a plurality of suppliers;

creating a plurality of hierarchical offers based on the plurality of atomic offers, the plurality of hierarchical offers including:

at least one first-level offer including at least one of the plurality of atomic offers,
and

at least one second-level offer including the first-level offer and at least one of the plurality of atomic offers not included within the first-level offer;

creating at least one counter offer associated with a consumer;

storing the plurality of atomic offers, the plurality of hierarchical offers and the counter offer in a memory;

matching the counter offer to one of the plurality of hierarchical offers to create a zero-sum offer; and

closing the zero-sum offer.

51. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 49, wherein:

each of the plurality of atomic offers include an atomic offer description and an atomic offer price;

each first-level offer includes:

a first-level fee,

a first-level description based on each of the included atomic offer descriptions,

and

a first-level price based on the first-level fee and each of the included atomic offer prices;

each second-level offer includes:

a second-level fee,

a second-level description based on the first-level description and each of the included atomic offer descriptions, and

a second-level price based on the second-level fee, the first-level price, and each of the included atomic offer prices;

the counter offer includes a counter offer description and a counter offer price; and

said matching the counter offer includes comparing the counter offer description and price to each first-level and second-level description and price, respectively, to determine a match.

52. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 50, wherein the zero-sum offer includes an atomic offer corresponding to each of the atomic offers included within the first-level and second-level offers.

53. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 51, further comprising:

determining whether each atomic offer included within the zero-sum offer is expired, invalid or unavailable; and

if so determined, not closing the zero-sum offer.

54. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 51, wherein said closing the zero-sum offer includes closing each atomic offer included within corresponding first-level and second-level offers.

55. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 53, wherein said closing each atomic offer includes:

sending a payment based on the atomic offer price from the consumer to the supplier associated with the atomic offer; and

at least one of:

shipping a product associated with the atomic offer to the consumer, and

providing a service associated with the atomic offer to the consumer.

56. (Previously Presented) A system for transacting multi-party electronic commerce over a network, comprising:

an offer processing server, having a memory and coupled to a network, adapted to:

create a plurality of atomic offers associated with a plurality of suppliers,

create a plurality of hierarchical offers based on the plurality of atomic offers, the plurality of hierarchical offers including:

at least one first-level offer including at least one of the plurality of atomic offers, and

at least one second-level offer including the first-level offer and at least one of the plurality of atomic offers not included within the first-level offer,

create at least one counter offer associated with a consumer,

store the plurality of atomic offers, the plurality of hierarchical offers and the counter offer in the memory,

match the counter offer to one of the plurality of hierarchical offers to create a zero-sum offer, and

close the zero-sum offer;

a payment server, coupled to the network, to exchange payments between the consumer and the plurality of suppliers; and

a fulfilment server, coupled to the network, to exchange messages associated with the zero-sum offer between the consumer and the plurality of suppliers.

57. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~55~~ 56, wherein:

each of the plurality of atomic offers include an atomic offer description and an atomic offer price;

each first-level offer includes:

a first-level fee,

a first-level description based on each of the included atomic offer descriptions,
and

a first-level price based on the first-level fee and each of the included atomic
offer prices;

each second-level offer includes:

a second-level fee,

a second-level description based on the first-level description and each of
the included atomic offer descriptions, and

a second-level price based on the second-level fee, the first-level price,
and each of the included atomic offer prices;

the counter offer includes a counter offer description and a counter offer price; and

said match the counter offer includes to compare the counter offer description and price
to each first-level and second-level description and price, respectively, to determine a match.

58. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 56, wherein the zero-sum offer
includes an atomic offer corresponding to each of the atomic offers included within the first-
level and second-level offers.

59. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 57, wherein the offer processing server
is further adapted to:

determine whether each atomic offer included within the zero-sum offer is expired,
invalid or unavailable; and

if so determined, not close the zero-sum offer.

60. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 57, wherein said close the zero-sum
offer includes to close each atomic offer included within corresponding first-level and second-
level offers.

61. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 59, wherein said close each atomic
offer includes to:

send a payment based on the atomic offer price from the consumer to the supplier associated with the atomic offer; and

at least one of:

ship a product associated with the atomic offer to the consumer, and

provide a service associated with the atomic offer to the consumer.